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By Erik Larsen

TOMS RIVER - Ocean County is expected to receive more than \$26 million in federal stimulus funds for various public works projects intended to improve water quality, Rep. John Adler, D-N.J., announced Tuesday.

The money, secured through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also is intended to halt the release of raw sewage into the environment.

"Ocean County is receiving one of the largest amounts of money in the state," Adler said in a written statement.

A total of about \$16 million has been earmarked for the Ocean County Utilities Authority:

- \$6.7 million for sewage treatment plant improvements.
- \$2.1 million for Ocean County outfall (discharge point) repairs.
- \$1 million for supervisory control and data acquisition at the sewage treatment plant.
- \$6 million for sewage treatment plant outfall repairs.

Additionally, United Water Toms River Inc. is slated to receive \$10 million toward a 4,306-square-foot building off Mule Road in Berkeley to house a radionuclides water treatment facility for the production of safe drinking water. The Berkeley Township Planning Board approved the facility in March.

"Local residents will soon benefit from projects that create jobs and make necessary infrastructure updates," Adler said. "Efforts to clean our water, such as projects to protect Barnegat Bay, are of the utmost concern to me and to all residents of Ocean County. These funds will protect our drinking water and keep families healthy and safe."